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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Renovations on Surinamese clinic a success

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PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Suriname citizens may not recognize the De Nieuwe Grond Clinic thanks to South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers' involvement in Beyond the Horizon 2008. A closing ceremony took place on Wednesday, July 30, at the clinic in Wanica, Suriname to commemorate the successful completion of all the engineer projects that were conducted as a part of the BTH08 exercise.

Surinamers now look twice at the two toned green clinic they enter for treatment, but a new coat of paint is not all the South Dakota Soldiers accomplished while at this project site.

“Things I can see and feel and touch - a fresh coat of paint, the new walls and cabinets in this clinic are real benefits for real people made possible by the friendships between Surinamers and South Dakotans through the State Partnership Program,” said U.S. Ambassador Lisa Bobbie Schreiber Hughes during the closing ceremony. “South Dakota friends, your work is incredibly impressive. As an American, I am proud to have you as my countrymen and I thank you.”

The De Nieuwe Grond Clinic was just one of six engineering projects completed by members of the 155th Engineer Company and 153rd Engineer Battalion, SDARNG, during the month of July around the capital city Paramaribo, Suriname.

Repairing rain gutters, replacing termite damaged walls, installing new wiring and performing other renovations were just some of the many upgrades the plumbers, electricians and carpenters of the 155th and 153rd made at De Nieuwe Grond Clinic, Houttuin Clinic, Pontbuiten Clinic, Mulo M.G. Poolschool and Lagere Technical School I and IV.

More than 210 Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard made up the two rotations that were part of BTH08 exercise over the past several weeks in Suriname. The exercise is a training opportunity that allows units to hone their specific military skills, as well as gain experience in deployment and redeployment situations. The renovation project at De Nieuwe Grond is a prime example of the craftsmanship of the South Dakota Soldiers and the difference they are making in the lives of Suriname citizens.

“Things looked terrible in the clinic,” said Bianca Brethweite, pharmacist assistant at De Nieuwe Grond. “Termites had eaten up everything; doors and furniture. It didn’t look good and people didn’t feel confident in getting their medicine here.”

“When we got here everything was broken and falling apart,” said Sgt. William Domagall, of the 155th Engineer Company of Rapid City. They didn’t have necessities for storage so we put in shelving. We also did painting and used metal studs to help prevent future termite damage.”

According to Domagall, the goal for the 155th was to make a comfortable learning environment and make clinics more appealing and sanitary.

“People would look at the building, turn away and never come back,” said Brethweite. “It was horrible and it smelt bad – but now patients have been saying the clinic looks beautiful and they are happy to come in and get treatment.”

Before the renovation project, patients waiting for prescriptions, as well as those waiting to see the doctor, sat in the same waiting area. With an average of more than 70 patients a day, people waiting for prescriptions made the small clinic crowded. Soldiers poured a slab of concrete and installed a roof to the outside patio of the clinic. This allowed people to walk up to get their prescriptions through a window; reducing the waiting line inside the building.

After pouring concrete outside the pharmacy window, Domagall wrote the unit name in the corner before it dried. While people are standing in line waiting for their prescriptions, they will be reminded of the South Dakota Soldiers who spent two weeks renovating the clinic.

“The team here, and at all the sites, have been working hard with challenges of supplies in Suriname and the timeframe we were given,” said Domagall. “Everybody’s working hard and the craftsmanship is really evident in the final results.”

“It’s a good thing for the U.S. troops to help us here in Suriname,” said Brethweite. “I am looking forward to the next project they work on.”

Photo Cutlines:



080730-A-5202T-097: WANICA, Suriname – Major Wyatt Hansen, Task Force Southern Coyote commander of Spearfish, S.D., explains the work completed by the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, to U.S. Ambassador Lisa Bobbie Schreiber Hughes (left), Permanent Secretary Ministry of Defense Dennis Kamperbeen, Director of Regional Health Services Foundation Dr. Maaltie Ashim Sardjoe and Lagere Technical School I representative Sanjay Autar on Wednesday, July 30, in Wanica, Suriname. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080730-A-5202T-097.jpg>



080730-A-5202T-083: WANICA, Suriname – Sgt. Sara Dvorak of Pierre, S.D, from the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard paints along side Suriname Soldier Cpl. Wurlen Holband at the De Nieuwe Grond Clinic on Monday, July 28, in Wanica, Suriname. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080728-A-5202T-083.jpg>



080730-A-5202T-039: WANICA, Suriname – Sgt. Steven Allen of the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, seals the old distribution window inside De Nieuwe Grond Clinic on Monday, July 28 in Wanica, Suriname. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080728-A-5202T-039.jpg>

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